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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS III - A WHO-WILL-BE-WHO  
PREVIEW

REF: A) BRUSSELS 755, B) BRUSSELS 762, C) WARSAW 552,  
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Sensitive but Unclassified - Please handle accordingly.

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Key posts in the European Parliament (EP) will be distributed in July. The five-year EP Presidency is likely to be shared between Jerzy Buzcek (EPP-ED, Poland) for the first half-term and Martin Schulz (PES, Germany) for the second, although other contenders are in the wings. The main group re-alignment will come from the UK Conservatives who will leave the EPP-ED group to form their own "European Conservative" group with a number of other parties. Most group leaders should remain in place, except for Graham Watson (ALDE). Main committee and delegation chairmanships, including the delegation for relations with the U.S., will be changing hands. This is the last of our EP pre-election series (refs A,B). END SUMMARY.

HOW ARE KEY POSITIONS ATTRIBUTED?

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¶2. (U) After the June 4-7 European Parliamentary elections, key positions in the EP, Committee and Delegation bureaus will be distributed among the political groups (and among the national delegations inside political groups) in the latter part of July. According to the "Claeys formula," key Positions in the EP change every two-and-a-half years. The position of EP President is usually split between the two biggest groups (which are expected to remain the EPP-ED and Socialists), with each group getting a half-term. The Claeys formula is also used for committee and delegation assignments. The political groups take successive turns nominating their MEPs, with more positions for the bigger groups, starting with the EP Bureau and extending to committee leadership (within a specific protocol order of committees), followed by delegation leadership and then committee memberships. Inside each political group MEPs and national delegations will bid for their desired positions/memberships, with bigger national delegations getting the first picks.

BUZCEK AND SCHULZ LIKELY TO SHARE EP PRESIDENCY

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¶3. (U) A deal between the Christian Democrats (EPP) and the Socialists (PES) should secure a shared presidency; however, current Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) leader, Graham Watson, has put forward his candidacy for the top job. He has little chance, however, against the expected combined PES and EPP majority.

¶4. (U) The EPP currently has two candidates for the top post and will hold an internal election at the end of June. Polish MEP Jerzy Buzek is most likely to be elected. An MEP since 2004, he was Polish Prime Minister in 1999 when he took Poland into NATO and prepared the country for integration into the European Union (ref C). He would be the first EP President from a "new country" and has support inside the group from France, Germany, Poland and most other

new member states. The second candidate is Italian MEP Mario Mauro, who may hope for support from southern member states in the EPP. Mauro is Berlusconi's choice and active in "Forza Italia," and he has been an MEP since 1999. He was most recently an EP Vice-President. The only PES candidate for EP President (to start in January 2012) is the current Socialist chairman, Martin Schulz.

¶15. (SBU) Current EP President Hans Gert Poettering (EPP-ED, Germany) is running for re-election as an MEP and, according to one of his advisors, should come back as a simple backbencher. According to an advisor, Poettering would only wish to keep the chairmanship of the special working group on the Middle East that he set up in 2006.

#### GROUP REALIGNMENTS

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¶16. (SBU) The British conservatives have announced their intention to leave the EPP-ED group to form a new "European Conservative" group. Other parties that might join them include the Czech "ODS", Belgian right-wing liberal "Lijst Dedecker", the Danish People's Party, Italian "Lega Nord" MEPs, and a number of Latvian and Lithuanian MEPs currently part of the Union for a Europe of the Nations (UEN) group. This could mean as many as 84 MEPs from eight countries. The new group would then be the fourth largest after the Liberals, who currently have 100 members. An EPP advisor told us that he believed such a group would be hard to sustain as it would be mixing mainstream and extremist parties on an "anti-EU" platform, with little cohesiveness on other issues. By leaving the biggest EP group, the UK Conservatives will also lose opportunities to get leadership positions in the most sought-after committees and delegations.

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¶17. (U) Other outcomes from the anticipated disappearance of the UEN group: Italian MEPs from "Alleanza Nazionale" will join the EPP as they are now part of "Forza Italia." Irish MEPs from the "Fianna Fail" party currently in the UEN have announced that they will be joining the ALDE group.

#### POLITICAL GROUP LEADERS - CHANGES POSSIBLE

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¶18. (SBU) According to one EPP-ED group advisor, current EPP-ED chairman Joseph Daul of France is likely to remain the leader of his group after the elections. However, another staffer mentioned that former commissioner and French agriculture minister Michel Barnier, if he decided to take his EP seat, may challenge Daul.

¶19. (U) Current PES leader Martin Schulz, a German, may remain PES leader for the first half-term, as he has no contender inside the group at this point, depending of course, on election results. If/when Schulz becomes+ EP President in 2012, a new PES chairman would have to be chosen.

¶110. (U) ALDE leader Graham Watson will not remain the chairman of his group. The only official candidate for his succession at this point is another UK "Libdem" MEP, Diana Wallis, who is currently EP Vice-President. Unconfirmed but persistent rumors have also cited Belgian former Prime-Minister Guy Verhofstadt and German Alexander Graf Lambsdorff as possible candidates to replace Watson.

#### COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

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¶111. (SBU) Committee chairmanships usually change with new Parliamentary terms. Committee and delegation seats will be distributed during the week of July 20. Current Foreign Affairs committee chairman Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (EPP, Poland) is likely to lose his chairmanship if Jerzy Buzcek becomes EP President (because, according to the Claey's distribution system, it would be very unlikely the Polish Christian democrats could get both the EP Presidency this top-level job).

¶112. (SBU) According to a committee advisor, German EPP MEP Michael

Gahler will most likely get to chair the Foreign Affairs Committee. Gahler has special interests in development issues, Africa, EU Budget and the Middle East. He also headed the EU observer delegation for the Pakistan elections in 2008. In addition to being the Vice-Chairman of the foreign affairs committee, he has been Vice-Chairman of the ACP (African-Caribbean-Pacific)-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, and a member of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and the delegation for relations with Iran. Although not specialized in "transatlantic relations," he speaks good English and has shown openness in meeting with U.S. diplomats on a variety of issues. Most other committee chairpersons are up for reelection but are unlikely to keep their current posts, given the great mobility between committees and delegations per EP house rules. That said, some MEPs have specialized in their fields and are therefore re-assigned where they excel.

#### KEY MEPS FOR U.S.-EU RELATIONS

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¶13. (SBU) UK Conservative Jonathan Evans, the current chairman of the delegation for relations with the U.S. is not running for re-election. The position has traditionally been in the hands of the Tories but this is likely to change because of their departure from the EPP-ED. German Socialist Erika Mann and UK Conservative James Elles, co-founders of the Transatlantic Policy Network (TPN), are both running for re-election in weak positions on their party lists and are thus not certain to be back. A few other MEPs known for their interest in working with the U.S. and likely to be back are Peter Skinner (PES, UK), Graf Alexander Lambsdorff (ALDE, Germany), Arlene McCarthy (PES, UK), Malcolm Harbour (Conservative, UK), Chris Davies (ALDE,UK), Elmar Brok (EPP-ED, Germany), and Francisco Millan Mon (EPP-ED, Spain).

#### KEY COMMITTEES FOR U.S. ECONOMIC INTERESTS

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¶14. (U) Because of the way co-decision rules apply (ref D), there are several committees that play an important role on deciding key legislation related to U.S. economic and environmental interests. These are: Economic and Monetary; Employment; Environment, Public Health and Food Safety; Industry, Research and Energy; Internal Market and Consumer Protection; and Transportation. While the International Trade and Agriculture committees do not fall under co-decision rules, they are also key committees for U.S.-EU economic relations. Although there is no indication at this point who will end up chairing each of these committees, nominations to be decided the week of July 20 will be worth watching.

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